




[locked/work] What a difference a year makes, part two



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MOOD: 😊 happy

MUSIC: Iron & Wine - The Trapeze Swinger

INT: ~~Harpy's new kitchen~~ CHAZ's kitchen, where he and HARPY have been exiled while T. makes SOMETHING. CHAZ and HARPY, glasses in hand.

CHAZ: Remember what you said about having no idea what to make for T,'s people for Christmas?

HARPY: They *make* everything. Store-bought presents are, like, forbidden. Unless it's maple syrup. But coals to Newcastle much?

CHAZ: Right. So tonight we're making totally fancy Fleur de Sel caramels.

HARPY: Making... caramels? I know both these words, but... you can *do* that?

CHAZ: And next year, when we have a little more time to plan, we'll make them with this totally awesome Maine-harvested sea salt

([https://www.livejournal.com/away?](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.stonewallkitchen.com/prdsell.aspx%3FL0%3DSpecialtyFoods%26L1%3DSalts%2526Spices%26L2%3DMaineSeaSalt)

[to=http%3A/www.stonewallkitchen.com/prdsell.aspx%3FL0%3DSpecialtyFoods%26L1%3DSalts%2526Spices%26L2%3DMaineSeaSalt](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.stonewallkitchen.com/prdsell.aspx%3FL0%3DSpecialtyFoods%26L1%3DSalts%2526Spices%26L2%3DMaineSeaSalt))

, wich is better than the French stuff, frankly, though don't tell Yitaka Ishnabe I said so. So they'll be New England themed.

HARPY: Making... caramels?

CHAZ: Drink your liquor, woman. We have things to burn. First, get your *mise en place* ([https://www.livejournal.com/away?](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196545424/in/photostream/)

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. You need a cup of heavy cream, a cup of sugar, a tablespoon of vanilla, a teaspoon of sea salt--don't bother using the fancy salt for this part, because the flavor will boil out at 250 degrees F--

HARPY: 250 degrees?! *Boiling sugar*? Because napalm and drunk people. That's a fine idea.

CHAZ: Drink your rye, woman. --sea salt, half a cup of corn syrup--

HARPY: Um.

CHAZ: *patient*

HARPY: Isn't corn syrup, um, the Debil?

CHAZ: That's high fructose corn syrup. This is just corn syrup. What it is, chemically speaking, is long chain sugar molecules that will encourage the caramel to form similar long-chain molecules--glucose and fructose--rather than short-chain sucrose molecules. Sucrose is grainy and crunchy; fructose and glucose are chewy and syrupy.

HARPY: A crunchy caramel is nobody's friend.

CHAZ: --five tablespoons of butter cut in slices, and then some smoked salt or fancy grey sea salt to sprinkle on top for pretty.

HARPY: This is not healthy.

CHAZ: Christmas is healthy since when?

HARPY: You win *this* time, professor.

CHAZ: I got both kinds of salt ([https://www.livejournal.com/away?](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196545494/in/photostream/)

[to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196545494/in/photostream/](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196545494/in/photostream/))

, so we will be bicaramel.

HARPY: I always was.

CHAZ: Don't remind me.

HARPY: Okay, so we have the stuff.

CHAZ: *Do you have the item?*

HARPY: *Can you guarantee our safety?*

CHAZ: Congrats, you just told me you're a group.

HARPY: Hey! No psycholinguistics in the off hours. Yeah, we have the stuff.

What's the hardware?

CHAZ: You've been watching Brother Alton!

HARPY: He's on Youtube.

CHAZ: We won't mention that that's piracy. The hardware is a wooden spoon, a candy/wax/oil thermo-meter-- (they are interchangeable, if you own a dishwasher

HARPY: I have that technology

CHAZ: Or a hot water bath, in my case)--a silicon spatula, and a silicon pastry brush.

HARPY: Silicon?

CHAZ: Heatproof.

HARPY: Right. Napalm.

CHAZ: Drink your drink. Do you have a nine by nine pan?

HARPY: I have a nine by thirteen?

CHAZ: ...

HARPY: Hey, it fits a decent pan of brownies.

CHAZ: Can't argue that. Okay, I also have a nine by thirteen pan, so I will show you how to improvise. We'll just fold the parchment to make a 9x9 space. But first we butter the parchment so the caramel doesn't stick.

HARPY: Butter... parchment (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195791183/in/photostream/>)
?

CHAZ: *patient*

HARPY: Okay. Hey, is it snowing yet?

CHAZ: Yeah, it looks pretty crappy out there. Good thing I can send you home on the Metro.

HARPY: It's snowing for Christmas! This is almost not like DC!

CHAZ: Snow bunny.

HARPY: Desert rat. Who would have thought I'd ever be, you know, buttering parchment and not really thinking it was weird?

CHAZ: Good job. Get the saucepan.

HARPY: Saucepan. Check.

CHAZ: Okay, set up the thermometer so the bulb is not touching the bottom of the pan, and put everything except the butter and the vanilla (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195790901/in/photostream/>) in the saucepan.

HARPY: Like this?

CHAZ: Right on. Now set it to medium (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196546576/in/photostream/>)

CHAZ: Now you're going to wipe down the pan as it cooks. This means dipping the heatproof brush into plain tap water and washing the sides of the saucepan with it, so there are no sugar crystals there to act as seed crystals and cause out of control chemical reactions and tragically crunchy caramels. And keep stirring. (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196546752/in/photostream/>)

HARPY: So like you just did?

CHAZ: You work the camera.

HARPY: Do I have to do it left-handed?

CHAZ: Bite me.

HARPY: *shows off wedding ring.* Ask Marti. I'm busy.

CHAZ: Oh, just wash the pan. You know I love you.

HARPY: It's starting to boil.

CHAZ: Okay, now put the butter in (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195791371/in/photostream/>)

, broken up in the pieces we cut.

HARPY: eek!

CHAZ: DO NOT DROP FROM A HEIGHT! Kind of slide it in. I know it's hot and scary, but it's safer not to throw things at it.

HARPY: Yessir.

HARPY: In other news, OMG I'm making CANDY.

CHAZ: That frothy bubbly thing is As It Should Be
(<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196547078/in/photostream/>)

HARPY: it is starting to smell like caramel

CHAZ: Okay, stop stirring it now.

HARPY: No stir?

CHAZ: No. Just swirl the pan every five degrees or so. You have dissolved the crystal structure of the sugar. Stirring or other agitation is one of the many factors that can encourage the fructose and glucose molecules in your syrup to rejoin and form sucrose.

HARPY: Which is crunchy!

CHAZ: *Smart Harpy.* Now find a tall glass and fill it with water and ice
(<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195791505/in/photostream/>)

HARPY: To drink?

CHAZ: To test the caramel. It needs to be hard ball stage when we pour it.

HARPY: Hard... ball....

CHAZ: I'll explain later (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.exploratorium.edu/cooking/candy/sugar-stages.html>).

Technically speaking the candy thermometer is more accurate, but we learn through doing.

HARPY: >225 degrees

HARPY: This is so amazingly exciting

CHAZ: Have you never made caramel before?

HARPY: No.

HARPY: Um.

HARPY: I have made toffee, actually. I lie

HARPY: but I was, um. Trying to make caramel.

HARPY: 0.0

HARPY: I gave up after that

CHAZ: So you have *tried* to make candy.

HARPY: ...maybe.

HARPY: 230 degrees (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196550654/in/photostream/>)
!

HARPY: It's hard to remember that the froth in the pan is functional napalm.

HARPY: I want to touch it.

CHAZ: Please don't.

HARPY: But it's so cute and delicious looking
(<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195795393/in/photostream/>)

! I want to pet it!

CHAZ: It will sear you flesh from bone.

HARPY: It smells so beautiful.

CHAZ: Okay, scoop some up on the spoon and drip it into the water.

HARPY: [ooo, soft pancake stage \(https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196550868/in/photostream/\)](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196550868/in/photostream/)

HARPY: [240 degrees \(https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195795661/in/photostream/\)](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195795661/in/photostream/)

HARPY: [it's turning brown \(https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195795903/in/photostream/\)](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4195795903/in/photostream/)

HARPY: I am in love.

CHAZ: *gloats*

HARPY: OMG, this is so much fun

HARPY: this is magic.

HARPY: 249! eeeeeeee! Hard ball stage!

CHAZ: Okay, stir in the vanilla--

HARPY: That smells so good!

CHAZ: and [pour it into the pan \(https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196551566/in/photostream/\)](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196551566/in/photostream/)

. Don't scrape the burned bits off the pan bottom. [Lift up the parchment to make the caramel's thick enough and fold it to make a little dam.](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.flickr.com/photos/45206927%40N06/4196552174/)

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up the salt--half smoked, half plain--not too fine!

HARPY: I know this part!

CHAZ: Apparently!

HARPY: I have sea salt caramels. I *made* sea salt caramels. And based on the spoon tasting?

HARPY: eek.

CHAZ: Yeah, and now think about how much people charge for these.

HARPY: Double eek.

HARPY: Dude. I made candy.

CHAZ: Can marshmallows be far away?

HARPY: EEEK!

HARPY: When can I eat these?

CHAZ: They'll be better tomorrow. But save some for T.'s folk.

HARPY: ... I can make more.

CHAZ: ...

CHAZ: Yes, you can. I'll send you home with the candy thermometer.

CHAZ: Don't store 'em for more than two weeks or so or they can get grainy.

HARPY: I think I can guarantee that. Hey, is it still snowing?

CHAZ: Pass the liquor.

TAGS: [harpy](#), [recipes](#)



This looks like a good idea.

...

This.

...

Little guy's not bad.

Gotta teach RHex to smear.

0 comments